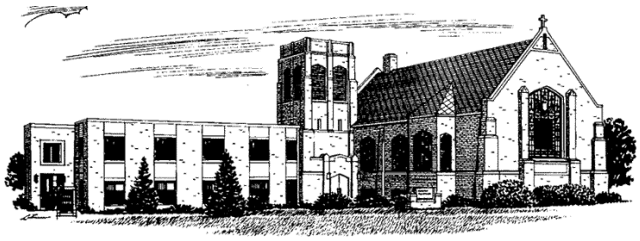


The Rev. Joan Oleson, Pastor
Home: 269-983-2475
Email: *oleson@saronlutheran.org*

Marcus Roll, Senior Choir Director,
Bell Choir Director
Email: roll1mc@gmail.com
Irma Gorman, Organist
Margaret Froehlich, Administrative Assistant
Megan Savage Financial Secretary
Email: financial@saronlutheran.org
Emily Gaul, Child Care

Typical Sunday Schedule at Saron:
During the School Year:
8:30 & 11:00 A.M. Worship
Childcare provided
9:40 Learning for Ages 2 – Adult

Summers (thru Labor Day weekend):
9:30 Holy Communion
Childcare provided
No Learning Hour

During the present Pandemic:
11:00 a.m. via Zoom

All are welcome!

We hold in prayer:
The Rev. Elizabeth Eaton,
Presiding Bishop, ELCA
The Rev. Dr. Craig Satterlee, Bishop of the North/West Lower Michigan Synod, ELCA
The Episcopal Diocese of Western MI

Our Companion Synods:

Christian Lutheran Church of Honduras
Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea
Lutheran Church of Latvia

Saron's Mission:
Joyfully sharing God's love for all!!

SARON NEWSLETTER

Saron Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELCA)
510 Main Street
St. Joseph, Michigan 49085

Website: www.saronlutheran.org
Email: info@saronlutheran.org
Phone: 269-983-1273
Facebook:
www.facebook.com/saronlutheranchurchst.joseph

July 2020

So what is your favorite children's book? Do you have one? Is it one of the classics or one that is relatively unknown? Do you have a favorite Bible story? Has its meaning changed if it is one you heard as a child and hear/read again now as an adult?

Each week as we worship on Zoom I have chosen a children's book to read. Most of them have been "churchy," a few not, but (hopefully) a connection made to Jesus and our life as a Christian. Most are new books recently added to my collection, although a few have been ones we read to our children and are still on our bookshelf.

I've appreciated these months the opportunity to read and listen to authors and see the accompanying illustrations of those who write and draw for our younger friends' enjoyment and their learning and growing in the faith. I find that they are speaking deeply also to the adults in the crowd, me included.

With phrases such as -
*God dreams about people sharing. God dreams about people caring. (*Tutu in *God's Dream.)*
*Church moves through your feet, it works through your hands. The people ARE the church don't you see? (*Cunningham in *This Is the Church)*

My prayer is that whatever our age, whatever the venue,we continue to learn and grow in the faith perhaps with new voices, sometimes with the treasured classics, but always with the heart of a child.

NOTE: A letter to the congregation (and friends of Saron) regarding re-opening, as well as guidelines that Saron has put into place, can be found on the home page of Saron's website. www.saronlutheran.org

Stay safe, healthy, and well, dear friends. If you need anything, please call and I will do my best to help out.

Pastor Joan

Caring and Sharing

In Our Prayers –

Arla Huelsberg, Lyra Krall, and Richard Schalon are at the Whitcomb Tower Retirement Center, St. Joseph; **Bernice Koski** is at Woodland Terrace; **Virginia Anserello** is at Pine Ridge, Stevensville.

Office Hours at Saron (these hours will vary during Covid-19)
Margaret (secretary): Mon-Tues, 9 AM - 1 PM
Weds of Newsletter Week, 9 AM - 1 PM
Volunteers: Weds, 9:15 AM - 11 AM (approximately)
Financial Secretary: Megan Savage; Tues & Thurs 5:30 PM
financial@saronlutheran.org
Call the office for more information.
When Pastor is out of town, emergency pastoral care information can be obtained by calling the church office (983.1273) or contacting the president of the congregation.
Note: E-mails meant for Pastor should be addressed to oleson@saronlutheran.org. E-mails to Margaret and the church office should be addressed to info@saronlutheran.org.

Happy Birthday Wishes to Saron's Members in July 2020

July 3 - Ellie Hammer
4 – Andrew Huff
7 - Preston Akers
8 - Elliott de la Foret
9 – Barbara Stelter
11 - Thomas Freemire
12 - Scott Gaspari
14 - Kylie Hammer
17 - Andrew Gustafson
Aaron Becker
21 - Marge Teal
23 – Lauren (Olson) Kauffman
25 – John Koehler
Richard Osgood
26 – Pastor Joan Oleson
Robert Hopkins
28 - Jennifer Nicholas
29 – Ilo Coar

Happy Anniversary Wishes to Saron's Members In July 2020

July 3 – Adam and Shavonn Bradley
4 - Robert and Gloria Hopkins
7 – Marcus Roll and Beth Gray-Roll
12 – Rian and Judi Huff
14 – Gus Leoni and Wendy King
14 - Joseph and Katherine Ulrey
25 – Brent and Linda Dipert
26 – Nick and Kati (Huff) Hooper

"God's Blessings for a very happy day and year round"

If there is anyone who has been omitted, or, if the dates are incorrect from the birthday and anniversary list, please call the church office at 983-1273. Thank you.

THANK YOUS

Dear Saron Family,
Thank you so much for the wonderful card, congratulations, and generous gift on my high school graduation. Your kindness will help me achieve my collage goals.
Jenna Henderson

Saron Lutheran Church,
Thank you ever so much for the out pouring of support upon the death of my dear Mother, Marlene Schalon. Although her passing leaves an incredible hole in our hearts, our family is very comforted knowing she was cared for by her wonderful Saron family, and by your Pastor Joan who was very special to my Mom.
Kind regards.
Jennifer, Bob, Marissa and Melia Beccard

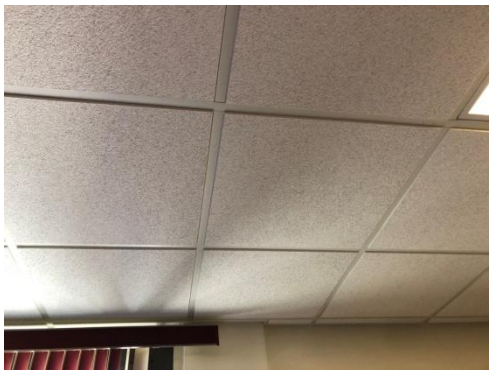
PRAYER GROUP

Join us on Mondays at 11:00 a.m. for a time of quiet reflection and prayer. Presently, this happens in individual homes; please email any requests to oleson@saronlutheran.org. Thank you.

As a follow-up on the leak in the flat roof over the "education wing" that we reported last month, we are happy to now report the roof has been repaired and the damaged ceiling tiles replaced. Although many aspects of our lives continue to be far from normal, we must continue to make plans as circumstances allow and look with hope towards the future. We are trying to do the same for the church building by continuing with project planning and moving forward with implementation when possible. Next up, we will be repairing the attic

fans over the narthex and sanctuary. Having efficient ventilation will help lower utility bills by reducing load on the air conditioning unit.

As of the end of May 2020, we had collected $256,616 towards our 3 year pledge total of $371,165. Thank you for your continued support. This journey may look different than we imagined, but please remember we are still in this together!



Worship

FACEBOOK

We love to share pictures of Saron's ministry on our Facebook page and we get great feedback. It is our practice not to put names with the pictures. If you have questions, or prefer your picture not to appear, please contact Pastor.

SUNDAY SCRIPTURE READINGS

As you prepare for worship, you are invited to read and reflect on the Scriptures for the day.

Sunday July 5 –
Fifth Sunday after Pentecost
Zechariah 9:9-12
Psalm 145:8-14
Romans 7:15-25a
Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

Sunday July 12 –
Sixth Sunday after Pentecost
Isaiah 55:10-13
Psalm 65:1-13
Romans 8:1-11
Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

Sunday July 19 –
Seventh Sunday after Pentecost
Isaiah 44:6-8
Psalm 86:11-17
Romans 8:12-25
Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

Sunday July 26 –
Eighth Sunday after Pentecost
1 Kings 3:5-12
Psalm 119:129-136
Romans 8:26-39
Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

Nursery News

Watch for more nursery news once we are back to in-person worship. For more information, contact Marilyn Lucy, Krin Jurgensen, or Pastor Oleson.

2020 FLOWER CALENDAR

The 2020 flower calendar is posted. Cost: $25.00/vase. This is an opportunity for you to give flowers in honor or memory of someone.
The church orders the flowers (unless you indicate otherwise) and you can take the flowers home after 2nd service.

We will resume the ordering of flowers when we are back to in-person worship.

HOW CAN I HELP?

Some of you have asked how you can help during this time of Covid-19. Here are some thoughts.

Make contact with friends and acquaintances, especially those who may be feeling isolated. This is a great time to use your church directory as your guide.

You may also want to consider the following, some local and some global.

From our presiding bishop
https://community.elca.org/emailviewonwebpage.aspx?erid=cc068be7-4986-42d9-880d-0aa1bc3c338d&trid=cc068be7-4986-42d9-880d-0aa1bc3c338d

Lutheran Disaster Response
https://www.elca.org/Our-Work/Relief-and-Development/Lutheran-Disaster-Response/Our-Impact/Coronavirus
Lutheran World Relief
https://lwr.org/

Mid-Michigan Flooding

Using funds from the North/West Lower Michigan Synod Disaster Relief Fund, the Synod has supplied food, water, cleaning supplies, and baby care supplies to shelters and sites in Gladwin and Midland counties. The Synod has also joined Michigan Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster as the ELCA is a member of the national organization to help assist those affected.

Much of the initial cleanup has finished and Pastor David Sprang is now talking with rostered ministers, county officials, and other church disaster organizations to see what role the Synod and Lutheran Disaster Response will play in the long term recovery plan for Mid- Michigan.

Thank you to all who have donated and helped support our work in helping those affected by the flooding. We are continuing to collect funds for recovery efforts through the North/West Lower Michigan Synod Disaster Relief Fund. In addition, Thrivent is offering a matching gift program that will assist Mid-Michigan and the Midland/Gladwin Community Foundation is also collecting gifts.

Youth

Are you in grades 6-12? Please join us for youth group activities! For more info, contact Scott at *scottgaspari@outlook.com or (Cell) 847-373-8825.*

LEARNING

Saron is a congregation seeking to become more fluent in the first language of faith, the language of Scripture, in order that we might live into our calling as a people renewed, enlivened, empowered and sent by the Word.

Men's monthly Bible Devotions and Breakfast

There will be **NO** Men's monthly Bible Breakfast in July.

Tuesday Evening Men's Bible Study

Saron Men's Tuesday Bible Study is continuing with the use of ZOOM and we are studying the lessons that will be used in the worship service the following Sunday Our studies start at 6:00pm on Tuesday. Each week, I will send out an "invitation" to you showing the link to the Study and the lessons that will be studied.

At some point in the not too distant future, we may start having our studies at the church. We will keep you up to date on any changes.

For more information call Bob Kynast at 269-921-2786 or bobkynast@gmail.com or Don Hafer at 269-985-3637 or hafer.don@gmail.com. All men are invited to join us.

As the Bible says "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another" (Proverbs 27:17).

THURSDAY MORNING STUDY

We continue our studies on Thursdays at 9:30 a.m. via Zoom. We will be studying the coming Sunday's Gospel lesson. This Summer we are studying the African Bible study method. **Please let Pastor know** of your intention so you receive the sign-in information.

EPHESUS STUDY GROUP

For more information contact Mary Kynast at mfkynast@gmail.com or cell (269) 921-3816.

1ST SUNDAY BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP

We are taking a break for the summer and will resume again in the Fall. Hopefully gathered in person!

Here are the books we have chosen for 2020-2021.
October 4, 2020, "The Wife" by Meg Wolitzer;
November 1, 2020, "Educated" by Tara Westover;
December 6, 2020, "The Guest Book" by Sarah Blake.
February 14, 2021 we will discuss two related books;
"The Book Woman of Troublesome Creek" by Kim Richardson and "The Giver of Stars" by Jojo Moyes;
March 7, 2021, "When All is Said and Done" by Anne Griffin;
April 4, 2021, "Waking Up White" by Debby Irving; and
May 2, 2021, "The Dutch House" by Ann Patchett.
If you plan to purchase a copy of any of these books, we have the perfect resource right here in St. Joe. Please consider using "Forever Books" on State Street. Visit their website, https://www.foreverbooks.net/erbooks@att.net or phone (269-982-1110). Here's to a summer of good reading.

"Reading gives us some place to go when we have to stay where we are." (Mason Cooley)

Women of the ELCA.

DEBORAH CIRCLE

Deborah Circle will not meet during July or August. A September meeting will, hopefully, take place.

Hospitality

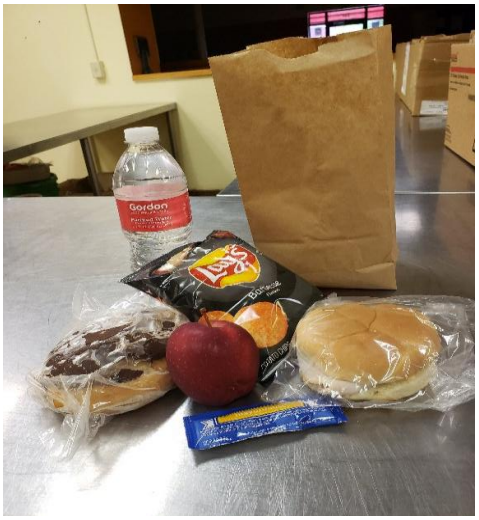
Watch for more news as we get closer to getting back together in person.

Outreach

BENTON HARBOR SOUP KITCHEN

On May 28th, with a lot of sanitizing, Deb Standen, & Dave & Kathie Bradley packed 120 sack lunches. To keep everyone healthy the lunch, water & a warm greeting are not served inside the but are given to the clients outside the soup kitchen. This has become the new "norm" so if you haven't been called in a while to serve, this is the reason! During this pandemic it is even more important to continue Saron's mission of *Joyfully sharing God's love for all!*

Thank you to all who continue to support this ministry with your time, contributions, & prayers.



After the church building opens **large cans of fruit will be needed at the Soup Kitchen** & can be dropped off anytime at the church. Any questions or to volunteer or provide cookies at a later date please contact Kathie Bradley at 269-427-7083.

INCLUSIVITY TASK FORCE

A task force at Saron has been looking at issues of welcome and inclusivity and how to best live into our mission of "joyfully sharing God's love for all!!!"
As noted, the task force is working toward the possibility of Saron becoming a Reconciling In Christ congregation, that is a congregation intentional in its welcome of those in the LGBTQIA+ community.
Available at Saron's kiosk are several resources that can help individuals further explore various topics and aid in our conversations and welcoming. Serving on the task force are Kati and Nick Hooper, Laurel Gacek, Laura Hicks, Darlene Kiessel and Pastor. Contact any of these folks if you would like to know more.

Support

A Special Message for Travelers and Those Who Prefer Electronic Giving

Saron offers the option to give electronically for your convenience. Please contact the church office if you have any questions or to enroll. Thanks.

Tax Incentives during the Covid-19 Pandemic

"Above-the-line" tax deduction for charitable contributions

The federal government recently passed legislation to provide financial relief to families as a result of Covid-19. As part of the CARES Act, for the purpose of increasing the work of charitable organizations, individual taxpayers will receive new tax incentives for making charitable donations. The provision encourages individuals to contribute to religious, charitable, and educational organizations by creating a new "above-the-line" deduction (i.e. for taxpayers who take the standard deduction). This deduction permits deduction of up to $300 of annual monetary contributions. This is applicable for tax years beginning after 2019, and does not sunset after 2020. A related provision increases the limitations on deductions for charitable contributions by individuals who do itemize. For those individuals, the 50% of adjusted gross income limitation is suspended for cash contributions made in 2020.

IRA Distributions

For members over 72 years old drawing income from an IRA, the Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) is waived for 2020, thereby reducing your tax burden. Effective January 1, 2020, the CARES Act waived RMDs for defined contribution 401(k) plans, 403(b) plans, governmental 457(b) plans, and IRAs for calendar year 2020. The waiver applies to RMDs to be made in 2020 and to 2019 RMDs that were due by April 1, 2020 (if not already made in 2019). The good news is that Qualified Charitable Distributions can still be made directly from an IRA account to the church that will both benefit our ministry and reduce the member's taxable income.

As always, members are advised to check with their tax advisor for the latest information and interpretations before filing.

STOCK DONATIONS

Saron partners with TD Ameritrade, a brokerage firm, to accept stock donations. If you would like to donate stock, e-mail Matt Bradley to receive the account number for which the shares will be transferred to. Once the transaction has been completed, e-mail Matt Bradley the name of the stock, the number of shares, and the date of the transfer. This allows the transaction to be completed and ensures it is included on your giving statement. Thanks! Matt Bradley

Council News

Saron's Council Members – 2020

Karen Johnson (269-983-2800 – President
Krin Jurgensen (269-369-4493 – Vice President
Joe Ulrey (313-718-2563) – Treasurer
Scott Kohs (269-967-4017) – Secretary
+++
Krin Jurgensen (269-369-4493 – Worship
Brad Frey (921-8618) – Facilities
Molly Becker – Youth
Don Hafer (269-470-2255) – Support
Matt Bradley (419-306-5780) - Support
Jim Manore (269-983-5915) – Hospitality
Deanna Deaton (429-9086) - Hospitality
Kristen Harper (277-9277) – Learning, Youth
Karen Johnson (269-983-2800) – Outreach
Scott Kohs(269-967-4017) - Outreach
Joan Oleson (983-1273) office;
(983-2475) home – Pastor

Interfaith Action
SW Michigan Peace & Justice Collaborative

Film Discussion- July 6th and 7th

Interfaith Action, ALPACT, and the Dignity of All working group would like to invite you into conversation around the award-winning film "Just Mercy", engaging in one small piece of the important work of racial and social justice.

Community members are invited to view the film "Just Mercy" at their leisure (available on Amazon Prime and other streaming services) and then sign-up for one of the film discussion sessions-- either July 6th or July 7th at 7pm-- led by an Interfaith Action team member:

Once you sign-up, Zoom login information will be sent directly to your email so you can join in the film discussion virtually! In early August, the series will also include film discussions on the documentary, "13th".

Mark Your Calendars - Migration Series

To understand the commitments and current realities of migration, Interfaith Action of SW Michigan is launching an educational series on the various aspects of migration.

The series will begin with Session 1: "What is a Welcoming Community?" on **Tuesday, June 30th at 6pm**. Christine Sauve, Director of Welcoming Michigan, will present an overview of what constitutes a welcoming community and what cities or counties have developed model programs of welcome.

Session 1: What is a Welcoming Community?
Join Zoom Meeting:
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82408495226?pwd=U3ZxUHZuc3l6eDNOU2M1eU1FMjF3Zz09
Meeting ID: 824 0849 5226
Password: 646060

To learn more about the other sessions in the Theology and Current Realities of Migration Series, check out our website and Facebook page.

If you are interested in receiving emailed information on each of the sessions in this series, please sign-up: https://forms.gle/tommeiebh6nkLmyh9

On June 14 we offered a house blessing for Bill and Janet Oleson in their move to Erie, CO.

SARON LUTHERAN CHURCH
510 MAIN STREET
ST. JOSEPH, MI 49085

Website: www.saronlutheran.org
Email:info@saronlutheran.org

A Congregation of:
The North/West Lower Michigan Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

July 2020
We're on Facebook! Like us at
www.facebook.com/saronlutheranchurchst.joseph

We are currently holding our worship services via ZOOM at 11 a.m. each week. Please email the church office if you need more information. Also, know that we will update you, to the best of our ability, with news as to any changes. We are watching guidelines closely and seek to do our part in keeping everyone safe and healthy. Be well!

July 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	**2** 9:30 a.m. Bible Study Via Zoom	**3**	**4** Indep. Day **NO** Men's Bible Devotion.
5 Worship at 11:00 a.m. Via Zoom	**6** 11:00 a.m. Prayer Time (in homes)	**7** 6:00 p.m. Men's Bible Study. Via Zoom	**8** **NO** Deborah Circle meeting 11:00a.m. Virtual Coffee via Zoom	**9** 9:30 a.m. Bible Study Via Zoom	**10**	**11**
12 Worship at 11:00 a.m. Via Zoom	**13** 11:00 a.m. Prayer Time (in homes) 6:00 p.m. Support Comm. Via Zoom Newsletter articles due	**14** 6:00 p.m. Men's Bible Study. Via Zoom	**15** 11:00a.m. Virtual Coffee via Zoom	**16** 9:30 a.m. Bible Study Via Zoom	**17**	**18**
19 Worship at 11:00 a.m. Via Zoom	**20** 11:00 a.m. Prayer Time (in homes) 7:00 p.m. Church Council Meeting Via Zoom	**21** 6:00 p.m. Men's Bible Study. Via Zoom	**22** 11:00a.m. Virtual Coffee via Zoom	**23** 9:30 a.m. Bible Study Via Zoom 9:00 a.m. Soup Kitchen	**24**	**25**
26 Worship at 11:00 a.m. Via Zoom	**27** 11:00 a.m. Prayer Time (in homes)	**28** 6:00 p.m. Men's Bible Study. Via Zoom	**29** 11:00a.m. Virtual Coffee via Zoom	**30** 9:30 a.m. Bible Study Via Zoom	**31**	